

Remarks/Arguments:

The Examiner has indicated that the Response filed on February 5, 2004 is not fully responsive to the prior Office action as the Applicants have not pointed out in the specification as originally filed where support exists for the amendment to claim 30.

However, as stated in the Response, the support can be found on page 11, line 32 to page 12, line 12 and Example 6. More particularly, the Response on page 11 starting on line 4 states:

In the present method, an absorbent matrix that may be used in the preparation of a chitin film is formed as a result of mixing polymer solutions in which the polymer in one solution is insoluble in the other solution. For example, chitin is insoluble in water such that when a chitin solution is mixed with an aqueous solution of carboxymethyl (CM) chitin, chitin precipitates out of the solution and entraps CM-chitin to form a colloidal suspension (see page 11, line 32 to page 12 line 12 and Example 6).

Claims 30 and 31 have been amended to more clearly define the invention and as amended are clearly distinguishable from Shoenfeldt.

As stated in the Response, page 11, line 32 to page 12, line 2 and Example 6 disclose as an exemplary embodiment, mixing a chitin solution and an aqueous CM-chitin solution. Chitin is insoluble in such an aqueous solution. Chitin is soluble only in strong mineral acids and other solvents (see for example U.S. 4,062,921, column 1, lines 30-50). The specification also teaches on page 8, lines 5-6 that chitin becomes insoluble with the uptake of moisture. The specification as originally filed therefore describes mixing two polymer solutions in which the polymer in one solution is insoluble in the other solution and fully supports the amendment to claim 30 which specifies "wherein the polymer in at least one of the solutions is insoluble in one or more of the other solutions."

Furthermore, although the prior Response did point out in the specification as originally filed where support exists for the amendment to claim 30, such action was not required. The helpfulness of pointing out support in the specification is acknowledged, but Applicants are not aware of anything in 37 CFR §1.121 or elsewhere that requires pointing out support in the specification when a claim amendment is made. MPEP 714.02 recommends: "Applicant should also specifically point out the support for any amendments made to the disclosure." But it does not say that pointing out support for a claim amendment is required to comply with the provisions of 37 CFR §1.121 or any other rule or statute. Therefore the prior Response was fully responsive regardless of whether support in the specification was mentioned.

For the reasons discussed above, the Response filed on February 5, 2004, was fully responsive. Applicants respectfully requests early favourable reconsideration of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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